



Transesophageal Echocardiogram (TEE)

You are scheduled for a transesophageal echocardiogram (TEE). It is a diagnostic test that uses sound waves to help your doctor look at the inside of your heart. During this test, a doctor will help you swallow a flexible tube. This tube will pass through your throat and into your esophagus (windpipe), where it can be used to take pictures of your heart.

Preparation:

- Do not eat or drink anything, not even water, for 8 hours before the test. Your doctor will let you know whether you should take your regular medication on the day of the test.
- Tell your doctor if you have any allergies, or if you have ever had trouble swallowing. Also, tell the doctor if you are pregnant.
- Wear comfortable clothing.
- If you are an outpatient, arrange for someone to drive you home after the test.

Procedure:

- Before the test begins, inform the nurse or doctor if you have dentures.
- An I.V. (intravenous line) will be placed in your arm. You will get fluids and medications through this line.
- If you have had a heart valve replaced, you may get an antibiotic before the procedure to prevent infection.
- Your heart rhythm, blood pressure, breathing, and oxygen level will be checked throughout the test.
- First, the doctor will numb your throat with an anesthetic spray. This will lessen your need to gag and help you swallow the tube. You will also be given some sedation through your I.V. to help you relax.
- A “bite block” (a small piece of plastic with a hole in the middle) will be placed between your teeth. This will allow your mouth to stay open during the test.

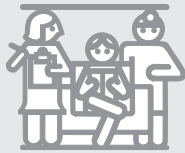
- You will be asked to lie on your left side and rest your chin on your chest. When you are in this position, the doctor will pass a tube through the hole in the bite block. You will be asked to swallow. You may feel an urge to gag, but this will go away once the tube is in place. Your saliva will also be suctioned out during the procedure.
- The test lasts 15 to 20 minutes.

After the Procedure:

- Your throat may be slightly sore for a few hours.
- You may be told not to eat or drink for about 4 hours, or until your swallowing reflex comes back to normal. When all feeling in your throat has returned, start taking small sips of water. If you can swallow these easily, you may eat or drink as usual.
- If you had this test as an outpatient, make sure someone can drive you home.

If you have questions about the procedure, please ask. Your nurse and doctor are ready to assist you at all times.

Special Instructions:



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Questions about the Clinical Center? OCCC@cc.nih.gov

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